

In the Specification:

Please replace the paragraph on page 1, lines 5-13, with the following paragraph:

The present invention relates to wheels for vehicles. More particularly, the present invention relates to a lightweight, energy-absorbing, flexible vehicle wheel constructed from an injection molded engineered polymer, such as, for example, a toughened nylon reinforced with carbon fibers, glass fibers, or ~~kevlar~~ Kevlar fibers, wherein the wheel may be embodied in either modular or one-piece construction, and comprises ribs and varying cross-sectional thicknesses for controlling stiffness; O-rings, gaskets, or dynamic u-cup seals for sealing contact surfaces; an alignment mechanism for facilitating bead ring alignment; and a mud plug having a quick release mechanism for quick removal.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 2, line 24, and ending on page 3, line 2, with the following paragraph:

The present invention provides a distinct advance in the art of wheels for vehicles. More particularly, the present invention provides a lightweight, energy-absorbing, flexible vehicle wheel constructed from an injection molded engineered polymer, such as, for example, a toughened nylon reinforced with up to approximately 50% of carbon fibers, glass fibers, or ~~kevlar~~ Kevlar fibers, and operable to support a tire on a vehicle. The polymer wheel has, potentially, approximately twice the strength and half the weight of a similarly designed aluminum wheel, and may be embodied in both modular and one-piece configurations. The wheel has broad applicability to many types of vehicles and vehicular uses, and is particularly suited for use on off-road vehicles and off-road racing vehicles that are subject to punishing driving conditions.

Please replace the paragraph on page 6, lines 13-17, with the following paragraph:

A substantial portion of the wheel 12, particularly at least the inboard wheel half 14 and the outboard wheel half 16, are constructed from the polymer which is a toughened nylon reinforced with up to approximately 50% of carbon fibers, glass fibers, or ~~kevlar~~ Kevlar fibers. A suitable polymer fitting this description is available, for example, from DuPont as "Zytel", product number CDV-805.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 12, line 11, and ending on page 13, line 2, with the following paragraph:

~~For~~ From the preceding description, it will be appreciated that the present invention provides a lightweight, energy-absorbing, flexible vehicle wheel constructed from an injection molded engineered polymer, such as, for example, a toughened nylon reinforced with up to approximately 50% of carbon fibers, glass fibers, or ~~kevlar~~ Kevlar fibers. The polymer wheel has, potentially, twice the strength and half the weight of aluminum wheels of similar design, and may be embodied in modular or one-piece designs. The wheel has general applicability to many types of vehicles and vehicular uses, and is particularly suited for use on off-road vehicles and off-road racing vehicles that are subject to punishing driving conditions. The wheel provides a number of advantages over existing wheels, including ribs and varying cross-sectional thicknesses that substantially increase wheel stiffness, thereby helping to prevent cracking or fracture failure due to driving stresses. This stiffness, however, is balanced with maintaining equally desirable energy-absorbing abilities and flexibility qualities. Furthermore, the gaskets, O-rings, or dynamic u-cup seals interposed between the center section and both the inboard and outboard wheel halves provide a highly advantageous seal therebetween. Additionally, the interlocking alignment mechanism of the first and second bead locking surfaces facilitate easier and

more convenient tire mounting and sealing. Additionally, the easily and conveniently removable mud plug provides an advantageous mechanism for preventing the interior area or cavity of the inboard and outboard wheel halves from becoming packed with mud or debris, thereby preventing a build-up of weight-adding mud which might unbalance the wheel and cause undesirable vibration, while ensuring quick and easy access to the valve stem for inflating the tire and to the lug nuts or other mechanism coupling the wheel to the vehicle.

Please replace the text of the section titled ABSTRACT on page 24, lines 1-14, with the following paragraph:

A lightweight, energy-absorbing, flexible vehicle wheel (12) constructed from an injection molded engineered polymer, such as, for example, a toughened nylon reinforced with carbon fibers, glass fibers, or ~~kevlar~~ Kevlar fibers, wherein the wheel (12) may be embodied in either modular or one-piece construction. In a modular embodiment, the wheel (12) comprises broadly comprises an inboard wheel half (14); an outboard wheel half (16); a center section (18); a bead lock ring (20); and a removable mud plug (22). Stiffening ribs (38,54,55) and varying cross-sectional thicknesses are provided in the inboard and outboard wheel halves (14,16) for controlling stiffness; gaskets (70), O-rings (71), or dynamic u-cup seals (73) are provided for sealing contact surfaces (40,44,64,66); and an interlocking alignment mechanism (62,82) is provided for aligning the bead ring (20) on the outboard wheel half (16).